

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 130349

FOLLOWING REPEAT LIBREVILLE 752 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO USDOC 18 JUNE.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0752

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, PFOR, GB, US

SUBJ: BONGO'S DESIRE TO PURCHASE DC-8 IN U.S.

1. PRESIDENT BONGO CALLED ME FROM PARIS YESTERDAY
EVENING JUNE 17 TO ASK ME LATEST NEWS ON DC-8. I
REPLIED THAT I WAS STILL AWAITING WORD FROM WASHINGTON
AS ISSUE COMPLEX AND REQUIRED CAREFUL STUDY.

2. BONGO THEN GAVE ME RUN-DOWN OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED
AT OAU MEETING AT MOGADISCIO. HE SAID THAT MATTER
OF AFFRETAIR DC-8 HAD BEEN RAISED IN CLOSED SESSION
AT TECHNICAL LEVEL BY GUINEAN (CONAKRY) REPRESENTATIVE
WHO STATED PLANE CURRENTLY FLYING RHODESIAN PRODUCTS
TO NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING IN FOREFRONT
ZAIRE. GABONESE MINISTER OKUMBA HAD REPLIED HE WELCOMED
OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE OAU INFORMATION ON ALL AFRICAN
COUNTRIES TRADING WITH RHODESIA. IMMEDIATE AND
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SUCCESSFUL EFFORT THEN MADE BY ZAIRE AND OTHERS TO

REMOVE ENTIRE PASSAGE FROM REPORT. FINAL REPORT NOTED MERELY THAT SANCTIONS HAVING PROVED TO BE INEFFECTIVE ONLY SOLUTION TO RHODESIAN PROBLEM WAS ARMED STRUGGLE.

3. THERE WAS NO CRITICISM OF U.S. IN FINAL OAU REPORT AND ONLY TWO REFERENCES: ONE NOTING FAVORABLY U.S. EFFORTS TO SOLVE MID-EAST CRISIS AND ONE THANKING PRESIDENT NIXON FOR HIS MESSAGE.

4. BONGO THEN SAID HE HAD HEARD (FROM UNNAMED SOURCE) THAT HIS REQUEST FOR SEABORD DC-8 HAD LED TO RENEWED INVESTIGATION OF FIRST DC-8 WHICH TOTALLY UNRELATED MATTER. HE SAID HE WOULD INSTRUCT HIS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON TO PRESS GOG CASE MORE FORCEFULLY AND IF MATTER NOT PROMPTLY RESOLVED HE WOULD SEND GOG MINISTER TO WASHINGTON TO TAKE UP ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. I ATTEMPTED TO DISSUADE HIM FROM LATTER COURSE, STATING EVERY EFFORT BEING MADE TO RESOLVE ISSUE AND I DOUBTED THAT GOG MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE.

5. BONGO THEN COMMENTED MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHY FRIENDS WITH WHOM HE TRYING TO MAINTAIN CLOSEST RELATIONS WERE CAUSING HIM TROUBLE. HE CITED RECENT INCIDENT OF MUHAMMED ALI FIGHT. BONGO FLATLY STATED THAT MOBUTU HAD PREVENTED EXHIBITION BOUT IN LIBREVILLE AND HE ACCUSED MOBUTU OF HAVING STOOPED TO POINT OF INSTIGATING CALL THREATENING ALI'S LIFE IF HE CAME TO LIBREVILLE. BONGO ASKED ME WHY THOSE COUNTRIES HE SOUGHT FRIENDSHIP WITH SOUGHT TO CAUSE HIM DIFFICULTIES. I ASSURED THAT USG DID NOT.

6. BONGO WENT ON TO STATE FIRMLY BUT IN FRIENDLY TONE THAT IF DC-8 MATTER NOT RESOLVED HE WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT IN HIS FUTURE DEALINGS WITH U.S. FIRMS. CONVERSATION CONTINUED IN AMICABLE FASHION WITH BONGO DESCRIBING TO ME PROBLEMS RELATING TO SELECTION OF NEW SECGEN OF OAU WHO WAS, HE SAID, GOOD FRIEND OF HIS AND CONVERSATION ENDED PLEASANTLY WITH BONGO SAYING HE WOULD BE SEEING ME IN FEW DAYS IN LIBREVILLE.

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7. COMMENT: LEAVING ASIDE STRICTLY LEGAL ASPECT, WHICH DEPARTMENT IN BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE, WOULD SEEM TO EMBASSY THAT MATTER OF USG PERMITTING OR NOT ISSUANCE OF EXPORT LICENSE BOILS DOWN TO QUESTION OF WEIGHING MORALITY ASPECTS VERSUS CONSIDERATIONS OF NATIONAL INTEREST. IF WE CONSIDER THAT FACT GABON HAS BEEN DEALING AND CONTINUES TO DEAL WITH RHODESIA GROUNDS FOR DENYING SALE OF AIRCRAFT WHICH, FROM ALL INDICATIONS, WILL NOT RPT NOT

BE ENGAGED IN RHODESIAN TRADE, THEN WE SHOULD DENY
EXPORT LICENSE FOR SEABORD DC-8. IN ALL LOGIC WE SHOULD
THEN ALSO DENY U.S. SALES TO ZAIRE AND MANY OTHER
COUNTRIES AS WELL. IF, ON OTHER HAND, WE CONSIDER U.S.
NATIONAL INTERESTS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ATTEMPTING TEACH OTHERS
MORAL LESSONS, THEN WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT A
LARGE NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL ISSUES OF CONSIDERABLE
IMPORTANCE TO U.S. ARE ABOUT TO BE TAKEN IN NEXT FEW WEEKS.
HARD DECISIONS ON RAILROAD CONTRACTS ABOUT TO BE MADE.
CRUCIAL DECISIONS REGARDING BETHLEHEM'S INTEREST IN
BELINGA IRON ORE SCHEDULED TO BE TAKEN PRIOR TO JULY 11
AND BETHLEHEM SENDING REP (SCHNEIDER) TO LIBREVILLE
FIRST WEEK IN JULY TO FINALIZE TENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS MADE
LAST WEEK IN PARIS. OTHER MATTERS INCLUDE PENDING
CONTRACTS OF LOUIS BERGER FOR TOURISM STUDY, EXTENSION
OF LIBREVILLE'S INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL AND OTHER PROJECTS
ABOUT WHICH LOUIS BERGER PHONED ME YESTERDAY FROM THE
U.S. TO IMPRESS ON ME IMPORTANCE FIRM ATTACHES TO OBTAINING
GOG GOODWILL TO FIRM UP CONTRACTS. SEVERAL U.S.
PROPOSALS FOR OFF-SHORE OIL CONCESSIONS OR OIL PURCHASES
ARE ALSO PENDING, ALONG WITH POSSIBLE PAN AM CONTRACT.
MCKESSON
UNQUOTE BROWN

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